

Send an email to encourage your friends and colleagues to Pay the Rent for Invasion Day.

We have attached below an email that you can adapt and send to invite others to contribute to the Black GST campaign. We believe that Invasion Day is an opportune time for people to Pay the Rent!

Rather than sending this out as a spam email, it will be more effective if you send it as a personal email to the people who you know or work with. Feel free to change the text so that it suits your writing style and the people you'll be sending it to. Even if they choose not to contribute, it's a great way of letting them know (or reminding them) about the campaign.

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Dear friends,

The Black GST campaign invites you to **Pay the Rent for Invasion Day**.

Indigenous peoples from throughout the continent will converge in Melbourne during the 'Stolenwealth' Games in March. Through peaceful events and protests, they will use the games to bring international media attention to the shameful and unjust situation they face.

The convergence is being organised by the Black GST campaign. The campaign will use the Stolenwealth games as part of an ongoing process that aims

to:

- \* Stop the genocide of Indigenous peoples,
- \* Achieve recognition of Indigenous peoples as having sovereign rights over the land, and
- \* Work towards the development of treaties so that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can co-exist on the land.

I am one of a number of non-Indigenous people involved in the campaign who are supporting the Indigenous organisers. I believe that the campaign can help greatly to put the root causes of injustice for Indigenous peoples on the public agenda. The campaign is also helping me to think and feel more deeply about what it means to be a non-Indigenous person living on stolen land, and what actions I need to take to address this.

**One of the ways to recognise our occupation of Indigenous lands is to Pay the Rent**. The Black GST campaign needs to raise \$50,000 to provide transport and related costs for Indigenous peoples to converge at the Stolenwealth games, and to pay for other campaign costs.

The 218th anniversary of our occupation of Indigenous lands - Invasion Day on January 26th - is a timely opportunity for us to Pay the Rent and support the campaign. My partner

and I are contributing approximately 1% of our income this year to Pay the Rent for the campaign, but any amount will be helpful.

You can Pay the Rent directly into the Black GST bank account (see details below) either electronically or through your bank or credit union (or at a branch of the 'common'wealth bank where the account is held), or you can contact me to arrange an alternative way.

Account name: The Black GST

BSB: 063212

Account number: 10161432

There's more that people can do to support the campaign. If you'd like to find out about various Black GST events and activities, or how to become involved, please read the blurb below, visit [www.blackgst.com](http://www.blackgst.com), or feel free to contact me.

Yours in solidarity,

Rodney Vlasis

rodney@foe.org.au

### **\* What is the Black GST? \***

The Black GST campaign needs your help in **getting Indigenous rights back on the agenda**, through calling public and political attention to the issues of genocide, sovereignty and treaty.

We believe that Native Title and Reconciliation haven't addressed Indigenous rights on this continent. Native Title puts the onus on Indigenous peoples to somehow prove continuous connection with their land, an impossible task in many situations given the effects of dispossession and attempted genocide. A **more just process** would do the reverse, accepting that **Indigenous peoples have sacred connections and rights to this land exercised over tens of thousands of years**. It would put the onus on non-Indigenous people to prove that they can co-exist without interfering with these sacred connections and rights.

We also believe that **the Reconciliation process has failed**. The concept of reconciliation is based on the approach that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples need to 'reconcile their differences'. It reinforces the belief that both parties have been aggrieved, and that they now need to come to peace with each other. Yet Indigenous peoples have suffered attempted and actual genocide at the hands of white people.

The Koori population in Victoria has been estimated to have declined by 60% from 1835 to 1850. Earlier in that century most of Tasmania's Indigenous peoples were killed during

the 'Black War', and were then forced onto island reserves. Dozens of massacres have occurred across the continent, and over two hundred Indigenous language groups have died out ([www.kooriweb.org/gst/genocide/essayhol.html](http://www.kooriweb.org/gst/genocide/essayhol.html)). White settlers directly and indirectly killed large numbers of Indigenous people, and the Australian government continued the attempted genocide through enclosed camps, reservations and forced removals of children.

Indigenous peoples today continue to be severely disadvantaged, suffering shocking Third World conditions that Australia should be ashamed of. We must recognise the attempted genocide of Indigenous culture, society and people, and end it.

**Indigenous peoples are the sovereign owners of this land.** They have never given their ownership up, and non-Indigenous people are occupying their lands. Michael Mansell writes:

We are the first people of this land. We have suffered every indignity ever meted out to a people. Yet our strength is in our determination. We did not consent to the taking of our land, nor of the establishment of the nation of Australia on our country. Our consent to being subsumed within the Australian nation was neither sought nor given. Our sovereign rights as a people remain intact."

([www.kooriweb.org/gst/sovereignty/back-to-basics.html](http://www.kooriweb.org/gst/sovereignty/back-to-basics.html))

While a long-term process, we need to work towards treaties that **respect Indigenous sovereignty** over the land, and that work out ways in which **non-Indigenous people can co-exist without interfering with this sovereignty**. Treaties would restore the fundamental human rights of Indigenous peoples for self-determination, and would regain their spiritual, social, cultural, legal and economic relationships that they have been dispossessed from.

There is no escaping the issues of genocide, sovereignty and treaty. Unless they are properly addressed, Indigenous peoples will continue to suffer greatly and struggle to regain their dignity. Unless they are properly addressed, non-Indigenous people will continue to carry the scar in their souls and their society that comes from not being at peace with the land and its traditional owners.

The Melbourne 'Stolenwealth' Games in March is a great opportunity to get Indigenous rights back on the agenda. We can bring international attention to the shameful situation facing Indigenous peoples on this continent.

We invite you to regularly check [www.blackgst.com](http://www.blackgst.com) for how you can become involved in the Black GST, or to sign up to the campaign's announcements-only email list (low frequency) at <http://lists.riseup.net/www/subrequest/blackgst>

Thank you.

The Black GST Campaign

[www.blackgst.com](http://www.blackgst.com)